

The Office of Children's Issues

Case Closing Statistics

Calendar Year 2013

Since its inception in 1994, the Office of Children's Issues has provided assistance to thousands of parents and children impacted by international parental child abduction (IPCA). The following statistics contain data from calendar year 2013 (January 1 to December 31, 2013). These statistics only reflect those cases reported to the U.S. Department of State and therefore may not reflect the total number of cases of children abducted to/from the United States. The statistics are broken down by country and outline the variety of reasons for closing children's cases. The data covers two different types of cases, 1) outgoing abductions (from the United States; and 2) incoming abductions (to the United States). No personally identifiable information is included.

As children's cases are closed in our database, the reasons for the case closures are grouped into general categories. As each case is different, each category can include a number of different fact patterns and results. In certain situations, a case may later be reopened as appropriate circumstances warrant. The general categories and descriptions follow.

International Parental Child Abduction

- **Judicial Decision: Return Ordered (Hague Proceeding):** A court orders the return of a child pursuant to judicial proceedings under the Hague Abduction Convention. In most instances, the case is not closed until the order is final and the child has returned to his or her habitual residence.
- **Judicial Decision: Return Denied (Hague Proceeding):** A court denies the return of a child pursuant to judicial proceedings under the Hague Abduction Convention. In most instances, a case is not closed until the denial order is final and all appeals have been exhausted.

- **Judicial Decision: Return Ordered (Domestic Proceeding):** A court orders the return of a child pursuant to judicial proceedings under the domestic law of the country and not under the Hague Abduction Convention. In most instances, the case is not closed until the order is final and the child has returned to his or her habitual residence.
- **Judicial Decision: Return Denied (Domestic Proceeding):** A court denies the return of a child pursuant to judicial proceedings under the domestic law of the country and not under the Hague Abduction Convention. In most instances, a case is not closed until the denial order is final and all appeals have been exhausted.
- **Voluntary Return:** A child returns to his or her habitual residence absent a court order. This can occur prior to the filing of a case in court or during a court proceeding. A voluntary return can be carried out by one parent, both parents, or even by an older abducted child who has decided he/she wants to return to their habitual residence.
- **Withdrawn by Requestor:** A parent or applicant in a Hague Abduction Convention case informs our office or a court that he or she is no longer pursuing the return of the child.
- **No Response from Parent:** A parent or applicant in a Hague Abduction Convention case has been out of contact with the Office of Children's Issues for more than one year and attempts to reach them have been unsuccessful.
- **Age Out:** A child reaches the age of 16 (Hague Convention cases) or 18 (non-Hague Convention cases).
- **Case Rejected by Receiving Central Authority:** The central authority in the country to which the child was abducted or retained rejects the case. Generally, this occurs after the central authority determines that the application for return does not meet Hague Abduction Convention criteria.

- **Case Rejected by Sending Central Authority:** The central authority in the country of the child's habitual residence declines to forward the application to the foreign central authority. This generally occurs after the central authority determines that the application for return does not meet Hague Abduction Convention criteria.
 - **Other:** Any situation that does not fit in the above general categories. These include formal and informal agreements by the parents that do not result in the return of the child, lack of follow up by a parent, death of a parent seeking our assistance, and other situations.